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CHINESE COMMUNISM, U.S.A.

New militancy or new independence?

David McReynolds

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PRIESTS AS WITNESSES

Robert W. Hovda

PROSPECTS FOR THE WAR

William V. Shannon

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NEWS AND VIEWS

According to an estimate in the London *Tablet*, the Ecumenical Council has cost the Holy See about $10 million. This does not include the expenditures of individual bishops, two-thirds of whom paid their own way. Some sample expenditures: $500,000 for printing, $75,000 for the rental of electronic apparatus, $800,000 for the tribunes and seating arrangements. Five hundred and twenty-one votes were taken, which required the processing of 1.2 million ballots. A total of 234 Council Fathers died between the official opening and closing of the Council – 12 cardinals, 68 archbishops, 148 bishops, 3 prefects apostolic, and 3 superiors of religious orders.

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Cardinal Shehan has revealed that Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore may eat "the incomparable terrapin" on Friday without violating the legal abstinence. The Catholic Information Center of New Orleans and the Archdiocese of New York countered by announcing that proper Friday fare might include whale, frog legs, turtle and even duck – if the eater, in good conscience, could accept the latter as a waterfowl. We think this is good, as far as it goes. It does, however, leave entirely unanswered the problem of lemmings, water snakes, college swimmers, and tinned meat from abandoned seaplanes.

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"It is a sad, and worse than that, a dangerous fact that anyone who talks about peace today is in danger of being labeled an extremist, a fellow traveller, or a dreamy-eyed liberal with no knowledge of the realities of life. Those who work for peace are usually thought to be a bit soft in the head, whereas, in fact, they are often speaking in terms of plain common sense, and of the basic human realities which tend to get lost in the complexities of competing ideologies and half-understood technicalities."—Cardinal Léger, Archbishop of Montreal.

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Two weeks ago we reported the theory of a French writer that changes may be forthcoming in the text of Pope Paul's encyclical on the Eucharist, since the official version has not yet appeared in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. Father W. Van Etten Casey, S.J., writes from Worcester that there appears to be one flaw in the theory: the encyclical has already been published in the *Acta* (AAS, Vol. LVII No. 11, October 30, 1965).

•

Though spawned in a spirit of impish fun, the *Critic's* list of the 15 Most Important American Catholics has been subjected to weighty analysis by various sober observers. The Most Important of these, in our opinion, was offered in a letter to the *Wanderer* from Paul Hallett, a long-time editor of the Denver *Register*, who took a dour view of the proceedings. The full text of the letter follows:

"The *Critic*, the mouthpiece of the Liberal Catholic Thomas More Association, made the daily press with a selection of the 'fifteen most important Catholics in the United States.'

"Here are my brief comments: 1. Fr. John Courtney Murray, S.J. – his influence cannot be denied. Whether that influence is altogether sound must be left to the maturation of time. 2. Dorothy Day – wouldn't you know it! There is no denying the publicity this old lady gets, or her influence, which is purely destructive. 3. Archbishop John P. Cody of Chicago – why he is more important than other Archbishops who come to mind is not apparent. 4. Senator Robert Kennedy – he is an important politician of the moment. 5. Cardinal Richard Cushing–much publicized, he would be the first to admit that he is not the brains of the American hierarchy. The Cardinal who has really shaped the Church in America is Cardinal Spellman – at odds with the Liberal Establishment. 6. Philip Scharper, editor-in-chief of Sheed & Ward – this is a great publishing house, made great by the genius of the now retired F.J. Sheed. Scharper was obviously selected because of his Liberalistic addresses. 7. Phyllis McGinley, a poet – I do not know her. 8. William F. Buckley, Jr. – A well publicized political Conservative; in the matter of birth control, he could be a COMMONWEAL staffer. 9. Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy – her only claim to being important is that she is the widow of a President; as a Catholic, she is nondescript. 10. Robert Hoyt, editor of the *National Catholic Reporter* – whatever journalistic expertise Hoyt has comes from the years when he worked for the *Register*. His paper is well-publicized because of various gimmicks that tickle the fancy of the Liberals who control the news media. 11. John Cogley – if he can be called important, it is because he has been in sensitive positions, and he has been appointed for sensitive positions because he can be counted on to retail the Liberal line. 12. Fr. Thomas Merton–he has gone to seed. He now breaks into the news only because of his political writings, particularly his pacifist and anti-Vietnam campaign. 13. Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago – are there not other Catholic politicians just as well-known? 14. Sr. Mary Luke, nun auditor at Vatican II – her only claim to being 'important' was an address she made about changes in the government of nuns which was blown up as a 'liberal' pronunciamento – it was nothing of the kind. 15. Bishop John J. Wright – he is a prelate of ability and intelligence, but out of favor with the Liberals because of his stand against contraception; obviously he was included for appearance's sake. What about Bishop Sheen?

"To be an 'important' Catholic, one must first be a good Catholic and exert a constructive influence either on the Church or the Nation. By this standard, many of those mentioned by the *Critic* would fail. This magazine too often confuses publicity with importance."

JOHN LEO

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CORRESPONDENCE

Freedom at Manhattan

Albany, N.Y.

To the Editors: In the course of fighting for bona-fide freedom of the press on the Catholic campus, a student encounters a wide and curious variety of responses from those in authority who are reluctant to grant such freedom (much less recognize it as a right). Some of them are completely irrelevant – such as accusations of trying to take over the college; others appear less irrational, even reasonable at first glance. One such reasonable-seeming argument is offered by Mr. George Sheehan (COMMONWEAL, Jan. 7) in support of Manhattan's confiscation of an edition of the student newspaper which was, so I have read, critical of Cardinal Spellman.

In the second paragraph of his letter (whose main point is that John Leo unfairly "stigmatized" Manhattan by reporting the suppression), Mr. Sheehan states that "the seizure of the paper was in a sense a gesture since half of the edition had been distributed the day before." One can only speculate about the intended meaning of the action, but I find it difficult to believe that the authorities involved would not have been happier had they gotten to the issue before any copies escaped. At any rate, Mr. Sheehan's euphemism is only incidental to what follows. It is his next sentence which sounds like the voice of reason and, under the guise of good journalism, advances the sophistry which has so frequently been used to justify suppression and prior censorship: "the article in question was factually untrue . . . and, more to the point, was in embarrassingly poor taste . . ."

Whether or not any piece of writing is in poor taste is, of course, always a matter of subjective judgment. Obviously the author of this article did not share Mr. Sheehan's opinion of it. And surely no one person's opinion of an article, or even the majority's, ought to

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DE-ESCALATING THE WAR

The cease-fire truce in Vietnam has ended, but the bombing pause in the North continues, as we think it should. And while it too is precarious, a resumption of the war at the level of last year's intensity also gives rise to doubts about the best course for U.S. policy. If the present peace endeavors fail, the current state of temporary de-escalation may hold out the U.S.'s last chance of controlling the magnitude of the war and the scale of its commitment. Now, it seems to us, is the time to diligently seek alternatives to what otherwise is likely to be at least another Korea.

The cease-fire and bombing pause constitute no change in the basic positions of either side, nor, as yet, have they led to any concessions. What they do constitute, however, is a practical de-escalation of the war; and what they prove is that it can be done. A major factor in accomplishing this has been the prospect of negotiations, but we also think world opinion, including that of our European allies, was instrumental in bringing it about. If the prospect of negotiations evaporates, then simple human abhorrence of killing and devastation will have to suffice.

From a purely practical standpoint of American self-interest, the U.S. should explore the possibilities of de-escalation. Vietnam is a war the U.S. never wanted and has been reluctant about all along. Nor can Hanoi and the National Liberation Front be totally happy with the step-up in the war last year. Only China would seem to have gained, and even she, according to U.S. experts, is unprepared for, and presumably unenthusiastic about, a full-scale war that is likely to involve her.

Seemingly, only the NLF is fanatically committed to complete victory in the South, but even it may have a method to its madness. For one thing, it has given indications that it would not be wholly unhappy with an indefinite delay in the reunification of Vietnam. Perhaps it has goals in the South that exclude the North. In any case, from the U.S. point of view, an

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NLF not associated with the North would be easier to accept as a coalition partner in a South Vietnamese government. This was probably Secretary-General U Thant's hope in proposing a coalition of "all elements of the South Vietnamese people" as the basis for negotiations, and it is worth considering. For one thing, it has the merit of not allowing a combination of the NLF and the North Vietnamese government to swamp the South.

The immediate goal, however, must be to keep the war de-escalated, and perhaps to de-escalate it further. This means, above all, the continuation of the bombing pause, and next, a halt to further troop increases. At the same time, Hanoi and the Vietcong should be watched for their reactions. If there is any truth to the story that North Vietnam units in the South have avoided contact with U.S. and Government troops since the bombing pause, then there is reason to believe Hanoi is susceptible to this kind of approach. This course has its dangers, of course. But we should not repeat the mistake of retaliating against the North for actions of the NLF. The opposite course, namely a return to full-scale fighting, holds out hope to nobody.

LIBERALIZED DIVORCE

The New York State Legislature is currently studying proposals to liberalize the State's 179-year-old law which permits divorce only on grounds of adultery. Many of us, not just Catholics, tend to oppose any law that makes divorce easier to get—society, after all, has a stake in the stability of existing marriages, and easier divorces are likely to mean more divorces. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that the present law rests on any kind of consensus. The laws of surrounding states, though they differ on the question of acceptable grounds, come closer to the mark. They more accurately reflect the current consensus in America, as the present law in New York does not.

Those who believe that divorce is preferable to a ruined marriage rarely argue that a marriage can be ruined only by adultery. By so arguing, the current law tramples reality, leads some into real hardship and others into hypocrisy. The hypocrisy comes from "staged" adultery scenes for the benefit of the court; much of the hardship is borne by the poor, who cannot afford a divorce junket to a more lenient state. One strange byproduct of the current law is that a permanently separated Catholic couple cannot get the kind of civil divorce for legal purposes that the Church sometimes permits.

Some of the new grounds for divorce now being proposed seem more compelling than others. Desertion for two years seems a sound basis. So does the catch-all category of "cruel and inhuman treatment," which is necessary, though best known for its occasional abuses. The other two proposals seem more dubious: divorce after voluntary separation for two years, or after one partner is sentenced to five or more years in prison. Divorce, in our opinion, should not be granted on the basis of simple mutual consent (even after two years), much less on the decision of a wife who suddenly decides that her jailed husband is not worth five years of waiting. Since society does have a heavy interest here in discouraging family instability, we think the courts should, in all cases, demand evidence beyond mutual consent or a unilateral decision.

We do not believe that one's personal opposition to divorce is sufficient warrant for opposing all changes in the law. Catholics can very well oppose divorce on principle, while realizing that those who do disagree must not be prevented from following their own consciences simply because of political pressure from Catholics.

THE NEW MORALITY

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NON-PROLIFERATION

"The dictionary of mortal danger has given us a fresh word—'proliferation.'" Thus last January 18 Senator John O. Pastore introduced to the Senate his resolution calling for increased Executive effort toward obtaining a non-proliferation treaty.

Only a few years ago, the proliferation of nuclear weapons was considered a nightmare possibility; awed discussion took place of what was termed the "nth nation" problem. Unfortunately, this attitude has changed, even—or especially—in the liberal sector of American political commentators. Disturbed by the

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overextension of American military commitments, some of these commentators have applauded the Gaullist vision of an independent European "Third Force," which, according to de Gaulle, requires a French *force de frappe*. They have grown more favorable to the prospect of a nuclear India, or even Japan, to remove from America's shoulders its (perhaps improbable) Asian burdens. And, further, they have been so impressed with the dynamic of the new nationalism as to conclude that nuclear proliferation is inevitable. Indeed, it is sometimes maintained that the resulting international constellations will be far more flexible and rational than the prevailing balance of terror between the East and the West.

We cannot be so sanguine. When nuclear weapons proliferate, the danger of accidental war increases. Furthermore, the danger of these weapons' being controlled, at some point or another, by an irrational leader or group of leaders becomes almost unavoidable. The U.S. and USSR have avoided deterring the human race completely out of existence only by the thread of rationality which, though stretched to its tautest by the irrationally destructive capacities of these weapons, has yet kept them from being employed. In a world of new and unstable states, whose governing processes are still in doubt, whose religious and ethnic minorities are in conflict, whose leadership elites are in turmoil, whose very boundaries are often far from clear, the widespread possession of nuclear weapons would be an unthinkable risk.

Senator Pastore's resolution and the Johnson-Erhard communiqué of December 21, reiterating Germany's renunciation of national control over nuclear weapons, are steps in the right direction. But as Senator Robert Kennedy added to Pastore's remarks, there are many paths to nonproliferation, from seeking a settlement in Europe, to stabilizing India through foreign aid. Every path should be pursued.

UNITY OR TRIBAL POLITICS

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New Chance in Nigeria?

"We in Nigeria believe that the ballot, not the bullet, can best determine the right of any political party to form a government. . . ."—President Nnamdi Azikiwe's New Year Message, 1964.

The independence of Nigeria in October, 1960 was seen as an important test both for national unity and democratic multi-party rule in Africa. In few other African states have tribal politics been so important. Each of the major regions is dominated by a single culturally-related tribe speaking the same language: the Ibo tribe in the East, Yoruba in the West, and Hausa-Fulani in the North.

Tribal politics have not been based on ethnic lines alone. Whereas political institutions in the South were introduced into an atmosphere of social and economic change, the opposite is true for the North where political parties emerged from a social, economic and political traditionalism. Religion has played a major part—Islam as the main pillar of tradition in the North and Christianity an important factor for change throughout the South.

Tribal solidarity resulted, then, in the virtual establishment of three one-party states, each region controlled by a single primarily tribally-based party. There was little dissent within these regions; if any appeared, it was forcibly quelled. Violence became a major factor of Nigerian political life. During the 1964 election there were numerous documented cases of beatings and worse by party "stalwarts" (as distinguished from "thugs" who can only be found among the supporters of the opposition).

The use of such tactics was especially significant in the Western region, where Chief Samuel Akintola, with backing from the Northerners' powerful Nigerian National Alliance which controlled the federal government, resorted to coercion and fraud to stay in power. The opposition, led by the Action Group, retaliated. Incidents of mob violence became numerous as a result.

Believing the politicians had lost control of the situation, and having seen the results of civilian misrule in the Congo, many of the military decided to re-establish a sense of order and progress in domestic political life. The coup attempt was their answer.

As such, the Nigerian military take-over is vastly different from the rash of recent military coups in Africa. In the French-speaking nations the military coup has often been a re-shuffle of power within the small governing elite. Only is the Congo an analogous situation: the military, under Colonel Mobutu, overthrew inadequate, tribally-based civilian rule.

The military overthrow in Nigeria, in fact, could be a progressive act. Three of the assassinations have symbolic meaning within the Nigerian context:

* Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, who personified so magnificently oligarchical rule and the memories of British "indirect rule" colonialism.

* Chief Samuel Akintola, whose infamous rise to

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power in the Western region personified corruption in politics.

* Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, well known for his expanding personal fortune, who personified graft in national life.

Conversely, the murder of Sir Abubakar Tafewa Balewa was a rash and foolish act. Admittedly, he failed to come to terms with the crisis in the Western region. Yet, he was an honest official who, as a Muslim Northerner and as a statesman, dedicated himself towards the unification of Nigeria, cooperation with President Azikiwe, and the establishment of Nigeria's stature among African and indeed the world's states. The sense of loss felt at his death and the coming realization that violence is not the answer to Nigeria's problems may weld together a body of opinion supporting peaceful steps towards unity.

Tragically, the immediate future may see an increase in tribal and religious friction. The Sardauna of Sokoto was not only a political leader; he also assumed the mantle of religious leadership for many of West Africa's Muslims. A *jihad* to avenge his death is a real possibility. Meanwhile, Action Group "stalwarts" have beaten Akintola's followers, burning and looting their homes, and causing hundreds to flee to neighboring Dahomey. At the moment the Ibos have asserted some sort of control over the entire Republic; Major-General Johnson T.U. Agui-Ironsi, as well as many Army officers in support of the coup, are Ibos. Such Ibo domination may cause Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba antagonism, although each newly installed regional military governor is from that region's dominant tribe.

Many plans have been suggested for a political solution. Those which favor the split-up of the nation into more than the present four regions seem most readily acceptable; this would strengthen the federal government. Another approach towards unity may be the establishment of democratic one-party rule. The late Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar, hoped for "a time when we shall have to talk no more in terms of North, East, or West—but Nigeria." Nigerian nationalism deserves this second chance.

HARVEY K. FLAD

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

PROSPECTS FOR THE WAR

As this is written, American forces in Vietnam are observing the Lunar Year truce, but the prospect is that in the very near future the Johnson peace offensive will have petered out, military action will have resumed on a larger scale, and there will be not only renewed but intensified bombing of North Vietnam. In short, the odds favor escalation.

Any such forecast of probabilities naturally has to be hedged about with the qualification that only President Johnson knows the secret drift of his own thinking about the terrible dilemmas of Vietnam. He loves surprises and, like an old magician, delights in his capacity to astonish the public. It may be, therefore, that he will in the closing days of January sight some vapor trail of hope that will cause him to persist further in his diplomatic maneuvers and hold off new military action. It is also true that he deeply and genuinely wants to make peace in Vietnam. No chief executive in the nation's history has wanted to be a "war president" and that goes for Mr. Johnson. He would like nothing more than to be known as the Great Peacemaker. Because his eagerness to make peace is keen, he may conceivably accept the advice of Walter Lippmann and of Senator Joseph S. Clark of Pennsylvania and others in the Senate who are urging him to adopt a cautious, defensive posture in Vietnam.

If there are any wisps of diplomatic hope, however, no one in Washington can yet discern them. And if Mr. Johnson finally decides in favor of a defensive stance, he will astonish those who have known him best over the years. His political temperament rests at bottom upon an unshakable conviction that only the exercise of strength can command respect. The facts of the situation – as the President and most of his senior advisers view them – also point toward a decision in favor of carrying the war to the enemy.

A strategy makes sense only in terms of one's objective. A defensive strategy would involve merely holding Saigon and the coastal areas and thereby proving to the Communists that we could not be pushed out of Vietnam by force. It makes sense if the objective is to get the Communists to a conference where a permanent cease-fire could be arranged leading perhaps to a coalition government in Saigon in which the Vietcong would participate or to nationwide elections in which a new national government for both halves of the country would be chosen. But are these really the objectives of the Johnson Administration? Senior American officials

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believe that if nationwide elections were held in Vietnam, the Communists who have much the better organization would be almost certain to win. If a coalition government were organized for South Vietnam in which the Vietcong took part, these officials fear that on the basis of experience with coalition governments in Eastern Europe, a coalition would only be the prelude to a complete Communist take-over.

Many, though not all, of those persons who advocate a defensive position in Vietnam are cognizant of these possibilities. They regard them with equanimity because, as Lippmann has argued, it goes counter to geopolitical facts to try to establish American-backed governments in countries on the Asian mainland. In their view, it is only logical to assume that Southeast Asia will eventually pass under some form of Chinese hegemony.

The United States is likely to adopt a more aggressive strategy because it has quite different objectives in Vietnam. Contrary to part of what it says in public, the Administration appears to be aiming at the creation of a Vietnam as neatly divided between its Communist and non-Communist segments as are the two Germanies and the two Koreas. How these two segments are to re-unite as one country is left open except for the vague prospect of some negotiation and accommodation in the far-distant future. All that matters is that the Communists are taught the vital lesson – as the successive Berlin crises have taught them in Germany and the Korean War of 1950-53 taught them in Korea – that they cannot hope to unify the country by military force.

The creation of an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam is linked to a second and more important objective. That is the containment of Chinese imperialism in Asia. It is the predominant view within the Johnson Administration that the Chinese are using Vietnam to prove their theory that the Western powers, most particularly the United States, can be defeated by guerrilla "wars of national liberation." American officials believe that if we do not confront this Chinese Communist strategy in Vietnam and defeat it, the Chinese will then use it in Thailand, Malaya, and the rest of Asia. Secretary of State Dean Rusk has come under increasing criticism in recent weeks from the peace-now advocates because he is a convinced exponent of this "Chinese containment" view of the Vietnam war.

What would escalation mean? There are four possible stages. In the first, the U.S. would bomb military targets in and around Hanoi and near the Chinese border. They have been spared up to now for political reasons. The Air Force argues that it has only been permitted to bomb the three-quarters of North Vietnam that has but one-quarter of the military potential; no true test of the effectiveness of its bombing can be had until it is permitted to bomb the remainder of the country where three-quarters of the military targets are concentrated. In the second stage, the U.S. would mine the harbor of Haiphong; that would cut off one source of supplies for North Vietnam but it would be six months before the effects were felt. In the third stage, the U.S. would bomb the Red River dikes which would flood some of the best agricultural lands and over the course of the coming crop year would sharply reduce North Vietnam's food supplies. A fourth stage which might be entered simultaneously with one or another of the first three would be to bomb North Vietnamese airfields and knock out both the Russian missiles and the Chinese planes that are there.

All of these stages in the escalation of the bombing campaign would be accompanied by aggressive ground campaigns by American infantry to seek out and attack the enemy rather than leave the initiative to him. The ordinary Vietcong unit only fights three or four days a month. If the Communist units were harried by the Americans relentlessly, North Vietnam would have to commit more regular troops and more supplies to sustain them. If its resources and transports were simultaneously depleted by unrestricted bombing, it would in nine months to a year find the war too great a burden. It would then abandon its war in South Vietnam or at least greatly diminish the scope and intensity of its efforts there. So runs the argument of the American advocates of a heightened war in Vietnam.

But what of the risk of a Chinese intervention? These same advocates of an aggressive, forward policy believe the risk is small. They do not envision China courting a war with the U.S. at a time when its air force is still third-rate, its nuclear development only in its infancy, and its industrialization program still lagging. The Chinese, it is argued, are much more likely to back down before a resolute American stand now than they will 10 to 15 years from now when they will have built a large nuclear arsenal and perfected their intercontinental ballistic missiles.

But these are only educated guesses, not forecasts of what is sure to happen. Not even the most militant advocates of an activist policy are enthusiastic about the range of choices they offer. There is no war party and no peace party in Washington; there is instead an honest disagreement among men of goodwill as to which course will better bring peace to Asia and to the world in the decades to come. Before February is ended, we are likely to know the fateful choice President Johnson has made.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

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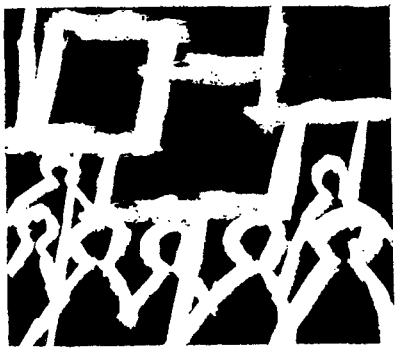

CHINESE COMMUNISM, U.S.A.

Behind the myth, a new direction for Marxist-Leninists

DAVID McREYNOLDS

One would think that having spent fifteen years in the Socialist Party I'd know my way around the American Left. Five years ago that would have been true. Today there are so many new groups and publications that few of us can keep score—the American Left is a whole new ball game. However, that part of it affected by pro-Chinese elements, about which I now write, is largely confined to those with a Marxist-Leninist background: the Communist Party, the Trotskyists, various independent publications such as *Monthly Review,* and "New Left" groups like the Progressive Labor Party.

Some of the problems raised by the Sino-Soviet split can be understood by comparing it with the Stalin-Trotsky split in 1929, the *first* and the *only* split of significance in the monolithic structure of world Communism until the present Chinese rupture with the Russians. Before the split the member parties of the Third International were still genuinely independent sections. After the split all Communist parties were, without exception, mere cogs in the Soviet machine. The men of integrity and intellectual ability were either broken in spirit or were purged. The demand for absolute unity and loyalty in the face of the "Trotskyist heresy" left a structure which was monolithic to its very bones.

Trotsky won some battles (he had a good deal of support in parts of Asia and Latin America, where Trotskyist groups to this day are major political forces), but unable to wrap the mantle of party legitimacy about him, as Stalin had been so successful in doing, he was doomed to lose the fight. The party is supreme. And here is where the present Sino-Soviet split differs so enormously from the Stalin-Trotsky split. This conflict is not between an individual and a party—*it is between two parties,* both collective, scientific, infallible instruments of Marxism-Leninism, devoted entirely to revolution, and both, by definition, free of any possibility of gross error. It is just this factor of duality that has so confused the Marxist-Leninist American Left, which maintained that there must be a *single infallible center* for the world revolutionary movement.

The situation is much more complex than simply asking American Communists to choose which god—which "center of Revolution"—they would choose. For many who gave Russia support did not do so because they thought Stalin was always right—the history of Soviet mistakes and blunders in directing the internal affairs of other Communist parties is notorious and well documented.

No, they supported Russia simply because, despite all its faults, it was the first "worker's state" and as such it needed time to consolidate its position. Carl Marzani told me that he was perfectly happy to defend the Russian political position—until after World War II, at which time he felt Russia was safe, strong, and could make it on its own. There are Carl Marzanis scattered throughout the world Communist movement. But when Russia had become a major power they were less willing to subordinate their national interests. Even before the 20th Congress there were restless stirrings in the mono-

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lithic world of Communism. Following it, those stirrings came into the open. The demands increased in country after country for a "national Communism," friendly to Russia but not subservient to it.

China moved forward as the champion of this line of "independent national Communism." She has unleashed fiery polemics against Russia for her meddling in the affairs of other Communist parties. She has proclaimed all Communist parties to be equal—with no party being "first among equals." China uses this line, of course, because it is one of the most effective weapons she has for undermining the pro-Soviet leadership of the various Communist parties. Doubtless China would like to have an International of her own, and would happily volunteer to serve as "first among equals." But to play that role now would risk her great appeal with those Communist parties seeking independence. China does not, of course, accept the Yugoslav theory of "many roads to socialism." But, providing one agrees that the only proper road is a militant, violent, revolutionary form of Communism, there can be "many centers of socialism." To say that a Communist splinter group in this country has taken a "Chinese position" does not mean that it is under the control of Peking; it is more likely to mean that, close as it may feel to Peking, it arrives at its own strategy and tactics in this country on the basis of its own analysis, not from outside instructions.

The fragmentation of the Communist bloc into national parties is quite obvious, and it has had a special impact on the American Communist movement. The American C.P. itself was always small and ineffectual if compared to its sister parties in France, Germany or Italy. Where the French C.P. was a genuinely working-class organization with a mass following, the American C.P. was "born alienated" because to a large extent it was born alien—a majority of its early membership could not speak English. It was largely due to this, and its small size and early subordination to Moscow, that events in Russia always have had a special importance to it. Psychologically, Soviet power served to compensate for its weakness; by the same token, convulsions in the Communist world inevitably have a deep impact on the American C.P.

In 1955 the much diminished C.P. still had considerable influence outside of its immediate membership. There were *Monthly Review* and the *National Guardian*, neither controlled by the C.P., but both part of what could be called the Marxist-Leninist movement. The C.P. also had some base left in the trade unions, and in sections of the peace and civil rights movements. By 1965 this had changed sharply, and largely because of the Sino-Soviet split. The "official" C.P. in this country remains loyal to Moscow. When I talked with Arnold Johnson—a spokesman for the C.P.—he conceded there had been expulsions and resignations over the Chinese issue, but nothing like the 1956-57 mass exodus after the Hungarian Revolution. The impact on the Marxist-Leninist movement in this country is not so directly upon the C.P. itself as upon its traditional allies and upon the "New Left" which is emerging.

Tensions on the Left

Monthly Review magazine (circulation 16,000) has taken so clearly a "pro-Chinese" position that in August of 1963 the C.P. launched an unusually bitter polemical attack on the magazine in its own monthly journal, *Political Affairs*. There had always been tension between the C.P. and the independent-minded *Monthly Review* editors, but this was confined within the broad general framework of Marxism-Leninism. The bitter words in *Political Affairs*, however, marked an absolute split between the political line of the C.P. and that of *Monthly Review*.

Tension has also existed over the years between the C.P. and the *National Guardian* (circulation 27,000), which, like *Monthly Review*, is run by non-C.P. members. In one sense the tension is between the kind of native American radicalism of the *National Guardian* and the hard-line pro-Soviet Marxism of the C.P. There is also bad-feeling going back to wrangling over Henry Wallace's Progressive Party, which the *National Guardian* supported. This, too, was all contained within a pro-Soviet context. Recently, however, the *National Guardian* is showing increasing signs of shifting from a pro-Chinese position. There is real, if muffled, dispute within the staff of the *National Guardian* over what course it should follow. But it would be completely wrong to think of either of these publications as being loyal agents of Peking. Neither publication was ever totally loyal to or uncritical of the Soviet Union and they are not about to render the Chinese a fidelity they denied the Russians. Nevertheless, these two publications, intrinsic and vital parts of the pro-Soviet Left in this country for many years, have clearly shifted their orbits.

The C.P. may also have trouble before long with the DuBois Clubs of America, a youth movement closely associated with (but not directly controlled by) the C.P. A look at the club's recommended reading list—a better indication of a radical organization's line than its official documents—turned up some surprising finds, such as the fact that several works by Leon Trotsky are on the list. While I do not for an instant think the

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DuBois Clubs are about to engage in any "Trotskyist heresy," they may be doing some broad and serious reading, which is unusual for Communists, and it may lead to something even more dangerous—it may lead to independent thinking, moving toward a *national* Communist movement instead of a "pro-Soviet" movement.

As for the Trotskyists, who under the banner of the Socialist Workers Party once played a major role in American radicalism, with the death of Stalin in 1953 they lost the focus of their anti-Soviet position and are still wandering rather aimlessly. After a number of false starts, including a brief political coalition with old enemies at the *National Guardian*, an eager role in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and a flirtation with Malcolm X and Black Nationalism, they have now shifted toward a Chinese position. Even counting their splinters, however, there are probably not more than 500 Trotskyists in the United States.

Their youth section, Young Socialist Alliance, did fairly well for several years, but one hears less of it these days. There is a terrible irony in seeing the Trotskyists moving toward a pro-Chinese position, since it is the Chinese who defend the memory of Stalin—but only his memory, not his policies. The Chinese policy of world revolution is after all very similar to what Trotsky preached in his own lifetime. (So far have the Trotskyists strayed from the "true path" that a small splinter was formed last year, called the Spartacists, to present the orthodox position. The Spartacists, all expellees from the SWP, inevitably publish a tabloid of their own—the *Spartacist*.)

In addition to the impact the Chinese split has had on the orthodox Communists—or, perhaps more fairly, on the "Old Left"—the Chinese line has resulted in the formation of specifically pro-Chinese Communist groups in the United States. The most stridently "official" of these is "The New England Party of Labor," which issues a mimeographed publication, *Hammer and Steel*. As far as can be determined, "The New England Party of Labor" is Homer Chase, an expelled member of the Communist Party, and some of his family. The group is not reported to have any following and I comment on it here only because it has been so widely listed in various articles reporting on the "Chinese Left."

By the common consent of all concerned (except for Homer Chase), the one really significant Chinese Communist group is the Progressive Labor Party, formed in 1961 as the Progressive Labor Movement (it changed to a "Party" last year). P.L. was organized by a group of Communist Party members who were expelled in 1960 for trying to advance the "Albanian heresy." Their top leadership includes Milton Rosen, William Epton, Fred Jerome and Mortimer Scheer — the oldest of whom, at 40, is Scheer. *The average age of its membership is about 25.*

The youth of their membership gives P.L. something of the verve and drive of the old IWW. Estimates of P.L.'s membership vary widely. When I talked with Arnold Johnson, he said he doubted if they had more than 100 hard core members in New York City and very few elsewhere. When I talked with William Epton, he said the membership was 1200. Reliable estimates place the figure near 700, with a very high turnover. (Many "hip" young men and their girls who want to "dig the radical scene" find the going a bit tough—there is too much discipline, and P.L. frowns on smoking pot.) Epton, a well-dressed and soft-spoken man in his early thirties, who serves as Harlem leader of P.L., admitted P.L. faced special problems because of the youth and lack of discipline of its membership. He sounded surprisingly puritanical when he complained about the loose morals of today's younger generation, and its widespread use of drugs. He indicated, however, that P.L. was tightening its discipline.

P.L.'s membership includes a number of Negroes and Puerto Ricans—some estimates suggest that 20% of P.L. is Negro. It runs five neighborhood clubhouses in Manhattan alone, two in Harlem, two on the Lower East Side, and one on the West Side. They have groups at various points in the South and are reportedly strong in San Francisco, but have little strength in the Middlewest. P.L. issues a monthly magazine, *Progressive Labor* (which replaces the *Marxist-Leninist Quarterly*), an East Coast bi-weekly, *Challenge* (which is printed in both English and Spanish), and, on the West Coast, the irregularly published *Spark*.

P.L. gives every impression of being around for quite a while. Its leadership may be young, but it is well-trained in organizational techniques, it is serious, and it has shown good tactical sense. P.L. does not have an official youth group (and with so youthful a membership it hardly needs one!) but just as the C.P. has close relations with the DuBois Clubs, and the SWP has close relations with Young Socialist Alliance, P.L. has very friendly relations with the May 2nd Movement (more commonly called "M2M"). This is a radical student group named after the first rally it sponsored—May 2, 1964, to oppose the war in Vietnam. May 2nd has had a real, if limited, success and is getting out an impressive tabloid of its own, the *Free Student*.

In the present political climate in this country it is possible to completely misunderstand what is happening on the Left. Under the tension of the Vietnam conflict, and spurred on by the usual Western racism which

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generously embraces the yellow as well as the black races, there is rising anti-Chinese feeling in the United States and a willingness to see a "Maoist" movement where there is none. The real fight in the American Left is not between Peking and Moscow, but between the militant and extremist tactics of groups like P.L. and the more orthodox radicalism of the Communist Party. Outside of Homer Chase and his mimeographed bulletin there isn't a truly "Chinese" Communist group in this country. Parts of the Left lean toward Moscow and parts toward Peking, but the Sino-Soviet split has basically accelerated the move toward a national and independent Communism in America. Those who look for some clear sign that American Communism will finally line up behind Russia or China will look for an eternity. Whichever side wins, what is most likely to emerge is a movement that, while more sympathetic to one side than to the other, *will be subordinate to no foreign party.*

3 Points About Pro-Chinese Influence

Three other points can be made about pro-Chinese influence on the American Left. First, the student movement may seem heavily influenced by Maoist thought—the emphasis on violence, on revolutionary struggle, and on anti-Americanism. But in fact the Chinese position merely coincides with—and did not create—the factors which leave a number of young Leftists today favorably disposed toward the Chinese. For one thing, the 18-year-old college student—if he is at all Left wing—was only 11 years old when Russia crushed the Hungarian Revolution. It is a very dim memory for him. But he was 14 years old in 1959, and beginning to think in the idealistic terms of early adolescence, when Castro so surprisingly toppled Batista. As a result the 18-year-old Leftist has grown up half in love with the Cuban Revolution. And, while he has not seen massive evil committed by the Communist states (rather he has seen a tendency toward liberalism creeping into them), he has grown up during the years when the very worst side of the United States has been exposed to public view: Birmingham; Mississippi; Harlem police brutality, and above all else, the shocking war in Vietnam. The young Leftist has been to jail in the South—or in Berkeley or New York. Impatient at the slow pace of social change in this country, he is not opposed to a little violence—or even, as in the case of the Chinese Revolution—to a good deal of violence in order to change society. He does not see China as a threat. He wonders instead why we are dropping napalm bombs on the Vietnamese. There is much, much more that one could write about the "New Left," but I settle here for pointing out that it is a disillusioned generation of Leftists, looking for heroes and not finding them in the contemporary American political scene.

Second, one must note that the Chinese position is widely respected among militant Negroes. The Chinese have "stood up to The Man," as one P.L. member put it to me. They are not, like the Russians, a white power, but a colored one. If the working-class ghetto Negro joins anything aside from mainstream groups like the NAACP, it will probably be something like the Black Muslims, but Progressive Labor, with its militant approach and with the prestige of China as part of its political arsenal, will certainly have an influence in the ghetto far exceeding that ever exerted by the Communist Party.

Finally, some note should be taken of the impact of the Chinese position on the *non*-Left—because this grouping will, in the months to come, act in concert with the Left on matters affecting China. If most Americans distrust the Chinese, we should keep in mind that other Americans have for years been deeply in love with Chinese culture. They were pro-Chinese when Chiang was in power. They are pro-Chinese today. This is an odd group, college professors specializing in Far Eastern Affairs, retired YWCA secretaries, former missionaries who served in the Orient. But, as a group, they are larger than we realize. (As an example, Felix Greene's movie on China, which is favorable to China, much to everybody's surprise showed for two months at the Carnegie Hall Cinema in Manhattan, a record-breaking run. There are not enough "Chinese Communists" in all of metropolitan New York to have made such a run possible.) This group, absolutely non-Communist—and really non-political—may prove in the end more "pro-Chinese" than even Homer Chase.

I would conclude by saying that if the American Left were as small today as it was five years ago, the whole question of "Chinese" influence would be of interest only to students of sectual behavior. What makes the question so vital just now is that the American Left has expanded greatly and has taken quite new forms.

Personally, I think that the "old line" Communists have a more sensible approach to the American situation than a group like Progressive Labor. But I expect that the youth, who are tied to none of these groups, and are wary of the kind of "square" discipline they insist on, will, in the end, transform all of us and bring about an American radical movement that may possibly unite not only "pro-Chinese" and "pro-Russian" elements, but may even unite "pro-Communist" and "anti-Communist" radicals.

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Streets vs. sacristy

PRIESTS AS WITNESSES

ROBERT W. HOVDA

The news value of a DuBay or a Berrigan case is very slight. Transfer of priests from congenial to uncongenial assignments is and has been the normal, not the exceptional, way of handling non-conformists in the American Catholic Church. And for bishops to fail to distinguish between protest-witness and moral lapse is equally traditional, at least in terms of the punishment applied to each. The loved one is sent into orbit.

The real news value is the fact that all of this is now news. And what a value this is! What a proof of the power of a John and a Council to extend to the man in the street what had been perhaps only the poet's, the gnostic's image of the Church. Suddenly we all begin to see that this habit-pattern in which both "superior" and "subject" (even these words sound alien) have been imprisoned is incongruous and wrong.

Suddenly we see that it is not enough for the Church's ministry to handle non-conformists as they are handled in political or academic life. It is not enough for the Church to be "no worse" than the state. The Church in its inner life must be freer, better, more open, more tolerant, not only because of its witness to the primacy of love, but also because its *raison d'être* is precisely the unprejudiced examination of all habits, customs, folkways in the light of Jesus, in the sacrificial meal where it (the Church) is made and where it regularly finds itself.

Suddenly the subject fights back, the frightened sister actually signs her name to a letter, the seminarian clips "confidential" notices and sends them to the papers. To say that these are acts of a generation basically disrespectful of authority is not necessarily evil or malicious —it is simply to be out of it. Completely, totally, hopelessly out of it.

It is true that we need a new theology of the ministry. But I don't think that is the point, the crucial issue, right now. What we need right now is to be *in it*. In what? "In Christ" is what I mean, but that scarcely says anything any more. Harvey Cox puts it this way in a recent *Christian Century* piece: "How am I making up my mind? I am trying to stand with one foot in the discordant history of Israel, old and new, and the other foot in the convulsive habitat of the frankly profane man of our late 20th century. This teetery platform provides my *place*."

The "subject," the sister, the seminarian—they are in it. They are on that teetery platform. Right or wrong on any particular issue, they are never going to put both feet in Israel, the past, again. And the bishop or superior who maintains a fortress impregnable to the world (and therefore impregnable to Christ, who is world-man) will never be able to talk to them again, will not make sense.

But this imagery has a tinge of absoluteness about it. And the only absolute I should be insisting on is love. H. Stuart Hughes, the Harvard historian, wrote the most optimistic words I have yet seen about Pope John's legacy and the recently concluded Council. They will give, he said, "reality at last to the Christian's ancient profession of love for all mankind" (COMMONWEAL, Dec. 10, 1965). Love leaps over walls and may even establish communication between the fortress and Cox's teetery platform, though the odds are worrisome.

Pope Paul, too, spoke of love as a summing-up of the Council's work. It seems so in the Council's documents, its teaching. It seems so in very many of its immediate effects, notably the sudden bloom of ecumenism among Catholics. It is not yet evident among the saints themselves—when they come marching in. It is least evident in the echelons peculiarly consecrated to its manifestation. I do not doubt that it is coming, but we must speed it up.

The POAU's Stanley Lowell does not agree that love is the great achievement of the Council. But then he is no expert on love. While his acid comments about Vatican II illustrate the devastating effects of rigid ideology upon rational thought and critical judgment, when he says that freedom in the Church is an important issue, everyone who reads the papers must agree.

Restriction, repression, the silencing of brothers, sisters, and priests in their human role in the body politic is no longer a private matter in which the prudential judgment of the ordinary or superior is the only major

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factor (apart from the misery of the subject). And if prudence can be defined as "love making choices between what hinders and what helps itself," then what can be said of the recently publicized acts of ecclesiastical authority in Los Angeles, Mobile, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Albany?

Bishops and the Faithful

We Catholics want to love the bishops of these cities and of every other. This is the point right now. We believe in their office. We are Catholics because we believe in the *necessity* of the eucharistic community of Jesus for our world and its growth—and the bishop is indispensable in that community. We are not talking now about all of the embittered or despairing ones who have left us . . . because they were wounded or because they couldn't or wouldn't pierce the camouflage. They are worth talking about, too, but that is another article.

It is the *faithful* we are subjecting to these indignities. Those who want the bishops to teach them, but who also want the bishops to listen to them because the bishops are so isolated. We are punishing our own witness—and, sometimes, though this implies a judgment, our best witness. Whether or not it is our best, it is witness where witness must be made today. On that teetery platform. It is incredible that a society whose mission is essentially prophetic and one of whose tasks is to hold events and deeds up to scrutiny in the light of the gospel should be scandalized at the social witness of its clergy and religious. Angry, perhaps. Uncomfortable, certainly. But scandalized, no.

The scandal is elsewhere. For the art and speed of communications change contemporary culture in profound ways. Scandal becomes a factor of considerable proportions in each of these cases. If one is not sensitive to our evolving respect and reverence for the person and if one feels that persons may be easily sacrificed to what one estimates "the common good," it is nonetheless impossible to overlook the scandal caused by these recent actions of authority.

And the priest or the religious or the bishop (for bishops, too, have suffered this abuse) is defenseless. The recent publicity is healthy, but it does not constitute defense. Often these men and women are not even on conversational, or speaking, terms with their superiors. Father Joseph Fichter's study of clergy-lay relations last year showed that most of the clergy in the largest dioceses feel that the bishop takes no positive or personal interest in them, or hardly any. In such an atmosphere, with the additional isolation (for seculars) of celibacy, punishments that may appear small assume sometimes tragic proportions—to say nothing of the psychological devastation involved in being punished for what one regards as virtue or virtuous deed. For doing what is encouraged in the Council's decree on the ministry and life of priests (art. 4): "In order that it might more effectively move men's minds, the word of God ought not to be explained in a general and abstract way, but rather by applying the lasting truth of the gospel to the particular circumstances of life."

Some defend our present system of handling these "cases" by the, for them, comforting reflection that the non-conformists are few. This is curious comfort indeed in a profession (whether clerical or religious) especially committed to preaching the eschatological view of life. *Why are they so few*—the priests, the religious, the bishops who carry eschatological witness into the marketplace?

Some answers are obvious. Charisms, gifts, ministries differ even in the ministry, and also in the life of the vows. And, I think, clerics are apt to exaggerate the extent to which the Church's clericalist past still throws the mantle of infallibility over the least action of the most minor ecclesiastical official.

In an earlier article (*Continuum*) on the prophetic office of the bishop, I mentioned another obvious answer: "Administration and eschatology are uneasy bedfellows. We can only sympathize if the burden of the former, which in a future age might be carried by lay administrators, reduces the bishop's capacity for understanding and addressing himself to accepted evils and weaknesses of the social order. *Acts 6* recommends the Apostles' decision to have others chosen for the stewardship of material goods, so that they could devote themselves to the ministry. To attempt to do both well may be to tax beyond endurance the potentialities of human nature."

Perhaps without our recognizing it, it is all deeply, basically, a money rather than a theological question. To recognize this is not to solve the problem. But it is a most important step to make for a Church that would be faithful (even while it knows it must be incarnate).

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For to recognize that money and property have a capacity for smothering growth and renewal and reform (a capacity that makes Mom in "The Loved One" look benevolent) is to accept the necessity of tension and conflict in the life and mission of the Church.

There is another obvious answer. Our notion of the relationship between the priest's function (and competency) and his total life as a person in society is clouded and imprecise. I (for example) spent my first 10 years as a Catholic trying to get the clergy "out of the sacristy" and my second 10 years trying to get them back in. And I was wrong and simplistic in both efforts.

I was wrong because, when I tried to "get them out," I was something of a clericalist. Confident that the "clerical presence" had a competence in secular affairs for which I have since failed to find evidence. Assuming implicitly that the presence of Christ in the city was somehow indissolubly connected with the presence of a priest. But I was wrong in trying to send them back "to the sacristy," too. Because I had the notion that the ministerial function or office swallowed up the life, or was coterminous with the life, of the person. And I can find no evidence for this idea, either. It is a purist, an unreal, an abstract solution, which has no relation to experience.

So let's have both. Let's have priests who recognize what their essential ministry and function is and who respect the limits of their competence. And let's have priests who do not cancel out of the human race ("throw in their cards," as J. F. Powers said), who take their places in the city, respecting the layman's (or unbeliever's) competence and leadership, yet bearing (as any Christian in the city) that eschatological spark of protest against the city's cruelty. It is that spark which marks the agents of Jesus' witness and of society's progress.

And there is still another obvious answer to that question I asked so long ago. Father Fichter uncovered it in the study previously mentioned. His survey told us, on the one hand, that the clergy questioned were satisfied that their seminary preparation was a good training for a "holy life" and for an "intellectual life," but, on the other, that they regarded it as a failure in terms of equipping them to "deal with people" or "cope with practical problems." The survey didn't attempt to discover how one can have holiness, in any remotely Christian sense, without success in "dealing with people." But this dichotomy is a real aspect of our clerical sickness, and another real answer to the question, "Why are they so few?"

Yet the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World teaches: "By no human law can the personal dignity and liberty of man be so aptly safeguarded as by the gospel of Christ which has been entrusted to the Church. For this gospel announces and proclaims the freedom of the sons of God, and repudiates all the bondage which ultimately results from sin; it has a sacred reverence for the dignity of conscience and its freedom of choice. . . . Christ to be sure gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic or social order. The purpose which He set before her is a religious one. But out of this religious mission itself comes a function, a light and an energy which can serve to structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine law. As a matter of fact, when circumstances of time and place produce the need, she can and indeed should initiate activities on behalf of all men, especially those designed for the needy, such as the works of mercy and similar undertakings. . . . The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties towards his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation" (Art. 41-43).

Now the winds of engagement and involvement are blowing. Not yet freely, but with all the force of an ecumenical council's teaching authority and in an atmosphere radically changed by an old man. What we have seen in 1965 is nothing compared to what we shall see in 1966. Two troublesome questions accompany us into the new year. Are we (on the subject side) deeply enough convinced of the primacy and necessity of eucharistic unity so that we can absorb all shocks? Are our bishops and our superiors open enough and broad enough and human enough and loving enough to give us sinful, sometimes wrongheaded, intentionally faithful, socially conscious clerics and religious the holy bread of communion instead of the stone of repudiation?

SISTER MAURA, S.S.N.D.

DOCUMENTARY

On the clay vase
below the vertical handle,
under the palmetto—
wings folded back,
tail feathers incised,
claws straining forward, talons outstretched,
the eagle touches the bounding hare.
The white belly
of the hare
trembles under the red glaze
of the eagle's legs.
Work of an Ionian exile,
sixth century.

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TRAGEDY AMONG FRIENDS

THE SCREEN

The one movie in last September's New York Film Festival that pleased both the squares and the illuminati was Czechoslovakia's "The Shop on High Street." Released here now as "The Shop on Main Street," this tragicomedy will no doubt continue to win praise and customers for the superb performances in the two lead roles and for its strong condemnation of intolerance and persecution, which is all the more strong for being devoid of soap-box rhetoric. Set in a German-occupied Slovak town in 1942, "Shop" skillfully slides from a comedy (about a mild-mannered, henpecked carpenter who suffers his wife and hates his Gauleiter brother-in-law) to a warm and sentimental character sketch (about the happy relationship between the carpenter, called Tono, and an elderly Jewish widow unaware that he is her "Aryan controller") to the inevitable tragedy (when he can't make up his mind whether to risk saving her from deportation or to protect himself instead).

What happens illustrates how men of good will are not necessarily men of brave will. And what makes "The Shop on Main Street" particularly poignant is the mutual respect and friendship of the two main characters. Polish actress Ida Kaminska is lovely as the aged widow who is gracious in her poverty as she recalls better days with dignity and gains strength through her own kindliness and adherence to her religion. Kaminska's portrayal is extremely moving, but even more stirring in its range is Josef Kroner's performance as Tono, the simple man who can behave like a fool, rise to the heights, sink to the depths of despair during self-recrimination, and still be sweet, angry, mean, thoughtful. As his good friend says, "If I didn't know you, I'd call you a swine." Directors Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos have handled the leads and large supporting cast well and are particularly successful in giving unity to this extraordinary film. My main objections to "Shop" lie in its extreme length (over two hours), the need for cutting in some episodes, especially the two drunk scenes that run on endlessly after they have made their points, and the concluding scenes that get overly melodramatic. I'm not sure that the finale, a dream-like fantasy in slow motion that shows Tono and the widow dancing happily in an afterlife, is entirely satisfactory. Perhaps the film makers are updating Browning: in this world of man's inhumanity to man, man's dream must exceed reality, "or what's a heaven for?"

"Sandra," another picture shown at last year's New York Film Festival and now released, may be a better made movie than "Shop," but it's likely to have more limited appeal—mainly because of its dour and decadent subject matter. In telling a modernized version of the Electra story, this screenplay doesn't do any pussyfooting around: it comes right out and says and shows that Electra and Orestes had more than a brother-sister interest in each other. Although the Greeks made no point of this in their plays—that were mainly concerned with the youngsters' desire to avenge their murdered father—modern writers, versed in Freud, have not been adverse to this incest theme.

In "Sandra," beautifully photographed in black-and-white in a handsome old villa and the surrounding Tuscan Hills, and directed by Luchino Visconti in an elegant operatic style, Sandra-Electra comes home with her American husband (Michael Craig) to help dedicate a memorial to her father who was killed in a Nazi concentration camp. As played by Claudia Cardinale, this Sandra is a glum, bitter girl—beautiful to look at, but along with some handsome clothes, she wears a scowl most of the time. She has cause. Her mother (Marie Bell) is bats and has to be watched carefully. Sandra hates her stepfather (Renzoz Ricci) and blames him and her mother for her father's death. And Sandra's brother (Jean Sorel) is anxious to pick up where they left off years ago as playmates. What happens during the next few days is drama on the grand scale; perhaps it doesn't have the universality of the Greek versions, but it is a story to hold one's interest, and under Visconti it is extremely well acted. However, the theme and the backgrounds have an air of genteel decadence that may repel some viewers. Dark, gloomy and forbidding "Sandra" may be, but it is never dull: mourning still becomes Electra.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

TEN BEST?

THE STAGE

Not the least of a play-reviewer's Christmas grievances (as opposed to his Fall and Spring grievances, which would run into each other if it wasn't for the Christmas ones) is the sight of all those ten-best movie lists. Week for week the movie critics seem to whine just as gratingly as we do. Yet at the end of it all, they have these rich harvests. One particular popinjay (let's call him Tiny Cratchet and hope he chokes on his mutton sandwich) delights in announcing that he could just

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as well name a whole *other* ten best movies, and they would sparkle every bit as splendidly as his first team.

Humbug to all that! Next to such monumental heartiness, the play-reviewer feels like a dimestore Santa Claus, with an empty sack and a cracked bell. Taking off one red mitten and counting on the cold-as-charity fingers beneath, I could do no better than the following moth-eaten list; all the rest is bent nails and orange peels.

1) The "Marat/Sade" would have to come first in most any season. This is one of those works of art that have to be mined gradually. A reviewer's first reaction to it is of small account; the first time you write about it you are barely clearing your throat. Among the questions that have to be dealt with, the foremost is: What precisely is the relationship between Sadism (*in its fullest sense*) and Revolution? Here we have two 18th-century ideas, with no apparent connection, yet spawned by the same society and proceeding in curious parallel; juxtaposed by Peter Weiss in a lunatic asylum. Peter Brook's direction makes the whole thing slide down almost too easily. Some intellectual effort is required before, during and after. Certain reviewers seem to have felt that de Sade's presence in the play is a gratuitous stunt—part of the circus atmosphere. But it is really the Key.

2) "Inadmissible Evidence." Modern man's love and death struggle with his own nervous system has been written up a good deal lately, but never more painfully than in John Osborne's new play. The climate of booze and pills and screaming hypochondria in which many people live these days hangs like diesel fumes over the stage. A friend of mine swears that he began to sense a lump in the back of his neck the size of a marble—one of the hero's own more colorful symptoms—and anyone who gets away without at least a rising case of the cold sweats probably doesn't live in New York. Osborne conveys particularly well the "bad" mysticism of narcosis, the flawed illumination: the doors of perception are opened, but everything behind them is poisoned, everything has a headache. The hero is a truth-teller of sorts, a prophet, but the distorting mechanism of his own nerves blackens his vision and turns it to nightmare. Osborne's best so far, and a prodigiously dingy performance by Nicol Williamson to help it along.

At this point the order becomes arbitrary.

3) "Veronica"—a very funny one-act play whose dry, delicate spirit would only be fractured by further discussion.

4) "Hogan's Goat." I suppose.

5) "An Evening's Frost." Not a play at all, but a mélange of readings and woodsy, Harvardsy hokum that works out surprisingly well.

6) "The Odd Couple." We're beginning to grope.

7) "A View from the Bridge." A revival.

8) "The Glass Menagerie." Another revival.

9) "Baal." Not only a revival but an imported revival.

10) "Half a Sixpence"—the only musical of which I can still remember three tunes, and therefore in its small way a triumph.

A sorry list (and if it adds up to 10 fingers under one mitten, so much the worse). Possibly some of the occasional plays I missed through sloth or bad management would have spruced things up a little; and I may have mislaid a gem or two through selective amnesia. But making all allowance for incompetence, affectation and snobbery, I submit that this is not much of a list.

However, we will skip the usual pieties about the state of the theater. It has all been said frontwards and backwards by now. At moments I am inclined to wonder whether, if this is the best Broadway and off-Broadway put together can do, they deserve all the coverage they receive; whether in particular they need all those lynx-eyed critics patrolling the barricades.

But this can be put down to leftover seasonal surliness. Our superstitious respect for the theater is one of the few positive aspects of the situation; another is the fact that on the whole, the trashy plays have been collapsing even faster than the good ones. Even when they load the line-up with movie stars, they can get into trouble—witness what happened to Van Johnson, Tony Randall, Tom Ewell (*don't* witness what happened to Lauren Bacall, Henry Fonda, Alan King. We still have a ways to go on this). Since the audiences are probably as much to blame for our dismal theater as anyone, it is a promising sign that the category "safe commercial play" seems to be shrinking; in fact, that the epithet "commercial" is now more hopeful than scientific.

And on this shaky note of good cheer, let us drop the whole subject.

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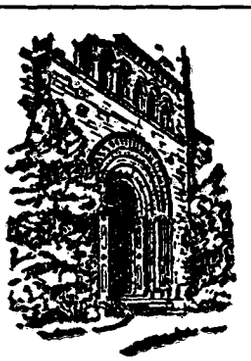

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BOOKS

Choosing one's limits wisely and unwisely

The Pripet Marshes
IRVING FELDMAN
Viking, $3.50

My Sons in God
SAMUEL HAZO
University of Pittsburgh, $3

Seventy Poems
LINDLEY WILLIAMS HUBBELL
Alan Swallow, $4.50

A Road Came Once
MILTON KESSLER
Ohio State University, $3.75

Identities
W. R. MOSES
Wesleyan University, $1.85

ROSEMARY F. DEEN

Most poetry must, of necessity, be minor poetry. Whether it is good or not depends on whether its limits represent the failures or the choices of the poets. *The Pripet Marshes* by Irving Feldman strikes me as an example of how poetry goes bad when the poet doesn't choose his own limits. All complicated surface, the poems sometimes have subjects too big to handle, as in "To the Six Million," where the poet tries to ponder his relation to a tragedy not susceptible to this kind of measurement. Sometimes the style is worried into intensification of feeling beyond any purpose.

The limits of the poems in W. R. Moses' *Identities,* on the other hand, are beautifully controlled. Mr. Moses writes chiefly in the Romantic order of perception, which (as Samuel Monk says) turns sight into insight. The rewards of this control are freshness and the maturity of not having to put the whole heart into every poem. The rhythmical line of the poems is long, the modifiers freely managed to make "the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another," as in "A Fable of Bees":

In remote fields, bees
on the quiet flowers
Are private, and as they fly
through remote air
No one notices. Back in
the wood towers
An oak. Rough and
unapproachable there.

Centuries safe from lightning,
safe from axe,
But secretly hollow high
toward its crown,
It takes the returning
gatherers. They relax
Safely into the dark when
night draws down.

Or rain; or stripping winter
has made free
All stems of leaves, and
made the fields still.
Only I know they are in the tree.
No one has tasted their
honey, or ever will.

Identities appears as a modestly-priced paperback, beautifully printed with generous margins.

Lindley Williams Hubbell's *Seventy Poems* concern Mondrian, fossil algae, the courtship of the Annelida, or Japanese gods, and are accompanied by illustrations. The style is extremely simple – elegant in the way Westerners imagine Japanese gardens are when they create around one or two objects the illusion of space that allows them to be seen in their own importance. Mr. Hubbell has lived as a monk in Japan, and the humor or irony of these poems often comes out of the meeting of two cultures. "Saidaiji" describes the statue, tall as Athene Parthenos, of a Japanese goddess who holds a vase for "the tears of the sorrowful." Athene, as Mr. Hubbell remarks, "carried spear and shield./ She was the goddess of wisdom/and cared nothing for tears."

Samuel Hazo selects poems from earlier books together with new poems in *My Sons in God.* Well written poems they are, but the later and, I assume, the newer ones are the best. He favors a heavy pattern of assonance and consonance:

Necklaced with kodaks
and binoculars,
June tourists range beyond
the battlements
to search for ricochets
in trunks of trees
or photograph old barns
with shrapnel scars,
the pledge of Lincoln on
a plaque of brass
and graves that hold the
the bones of regiments.

As this stanza also shows, Mr. Hazo keeps a fairly long line of rhythm pushing energetically against and through this rich texture. It seems to me, however, that the rhythm can't win out finally over the combination of rich sound and realistically detailed imagery. It is – not slowed – but mechanized by these obstacles, so that all the poems finally sound pretty much alike, no matter what they are about.

The number of occasional poems in these books indicates a fairly simple equation of poem to "idea." The poems in Milton Kessler's *A Road Came Once* are powerfully concentrated in a way that goes beyond minor poetry altogether. Mr. Kessler subsumes moods or occasions that another poet might give an entire poem to and organizes them into larger experiences than one occasion of life can actually present. It is hard to believe that a first book of poems can be so original and so mature. The originality is evident in the extraordinary range of the poems and in the degree to which the poems are "real-

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ized" – exist independent of statement.

His range is competent in both lyric and dramatic poems. There are many kinds of lyrics, some personal, some about others. "In the Tranquility of Decomposition" has a humor in its ironies. The narrator, trying to "compose" (I presume there's a pun in the title), struggles against the distractions of the autumn weather outside and a reader inside the library sleeping over her books. But in the end it is the distractions and the struggle that turn out to be important. The composing – and the "decomposing" – go on until the sleeper

wakes to go.

Her eyes are veined with shock.

Relieved, she shuts the door

That seals my tomb.

Lyrics about the natural world include the beautifully modulating sounds of "Beyond Anguish":

At dawn, caught beneath

the rim of light

it fled into a place still black,

tore its side upon a nail,

and bled small robes upon the snow.

It is particularly striking that these poems do not interpret or seek emblems in Nature. "Hymn to Rain," reminiscent of Thomas in one phrase, *moves* quite differently, not to a big, climactic rhythm, but towards the ranged, delicate "i" sounds of: "There will I lie, with the youngest grasses,/ And lick the nipples of rain." "An Instant of Water" is a rather exultant dream of being a kind of lord of the sea, easy and slick as a shark, able to hear "the shells call,/ Hollow as abandoned bells," but waking to the painfulness of being human and having "edges" – limits which define and separate.

Some poems have tragic power. In "The Lynching" the landscape and the victim are violently brought together and change each other. When Parker falls, to his eye "the sky was/ Grass and the flash of quartz in stone." It is the focus of his changed vision that makes the other changes operate, so that the final irony of the poem, in which death changes him into a "white man" seems to emerge naturally out of what we see:

Now, beneath birds,

Licked by the water's drifting mold,

Parker, skin bleaching white,

Swells in Pearl River.

"The El-Painter's Daughter" has no direct expression of feeling. The father's drunken sleeping is set within the strict, three-part frame of the daughter's movements: "she walked"

where the El-Painter, orange matted,

lurching in sleep, gargoyled the base

of a rusted girder.

She watched.

He shook on his side,

a drunken dreamer.

Paint spooled down like toxic honey,

Brocading the quivering

hand of her father . . .

She sucked the dissolving

lime of her ices,

and turned . . . .

The gargoyle, the toxic honey and the dissolving lime are pretty much beyond comment.

Of the three concluding elegies in the book, the greatest, I think, is "The Clerk Retires." The Clerk moves, never out of his trivial, anti-tragic setting, but always towards his death, "Sick, he breathes the pallid city dawn,/ trembles like an ancient closet-moth." Reading this poem, one realizes that the difference between minor poetry and major poetry is a matter of the level on which the poet speaks and of the degree of connectedness in his poems.

A poem such as "The Clerk Retires" cannot simply be about an event observed. There are so many different kinds of experience in one poem – experience of the real world where suffering is too sharp and incomprehensible to be evaded, and the experience of ideas or customs that seek to explain or be explained – that the kinds of connections among them are very complex. The tragic tone, as Mr. Ranson calls it, of this book lies as much in its struggle to master hard experience as in the sheer amount of hard experience it presents. The book is often painful, but the presence of suffering here seems to be a token of the real – what is altogether beyond our wishes – and what, therefore, we would not have if it didn't have a power of its own to make us recognize it.

Freedom and Man

EDIT. JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J.

Kenedy, $4.95

ROGER L. SHINN

When Catholics praise freedom, the outsider may find himself asking, "Do they really mean it?" As some of the authors in this symposium suggest, the Catholic love of freedom is in some ways recent—and suspect.

Hence I, a Protestant cheered but not entirely reassured by *aggiornamento*, approached this book with some eagerness and some suspicion. Its auspices were encouraging: the Georgetown University Conference on Freedom and Man of December, 1964. Its list of authors was attractive: some the most celebrated names connected with Vatican II (John Courtney Murray, Hans Küng and Karl Rahner), numerous other able clerical scholars, and two respected laymen (Daniel Callahan and the Eastern Orthodox, Charles Malik). Nevertheless, I wondered.

My questions, I think, were not entirely perverse. Anyone who gives much thought to the subject knows that there is no total freedom in human life. Society requires some forms of organization, restraint and authority. Individuals know destructive impulses that, given free reign, lead to slavery. Would these valid insights, which inevitably would emerge in this book, become pretexts for paternalism or even tyranny? Such rationalizations are not unique to Catholicism; Protestantism, the world religions and secularism, have all employed them. But Catholicism has traditionally put them conspicuously on the record.

The verdict is that the authors of this book do believe in freedom. They explore it in metaphysics, in politics and culture, in the arts, in theology. They affirm it, not as a concession to opponents or as an accommodation to necessity, but as a profound, exuberant conviction.

The test of any case for freedom comes not in its rhetoric but in its

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wrestling with thorny problems. Three such examples show the refreshing quality of the thinking that characterizes this book.

First, there is the issue of the practices of the Church. The case for freedom is not convincing unless it includes some acknowledgment of the abuses of ecclesiastical power. Several of the authors confess boldly the errors of the Church. The actual Church, says Hans Küng, "is not only a human Church, but at the same time a sinful Church." It has been distorted, says Piet Fransen, by life in "our Catholic ghetto." The issue of infallibility rises to haunt some of the authors and to leave unresolved problems, but nobody wants infallibility to threaten freedom in what are the normal processes of society.

Second, the authors believe clearly in the freedom to dissent from even the most highly authoritative judgments. There is no dismal echo in this book of the fateful doctrine that only truth, not error, has rights. Rights inhere in persons, not in abstract truth and error (Father Murray). "Nothing is so sacred and final as the human conscience," writes Father Fransen.

Third, several of the writers investigate carefully the nature of the authority that is a necessary part of any society. They show that it is not enough for this authority to be right. (Every authority claims to be right.) People (citizens in the political community, churchmen in the community of faith) have an appropriate place in the forming of authority. Hence authority "must have ears as well as a tongue" (Robert Johann). And it must seek not blind submission but willing response (Father Johann and Daniel Callahan).

All this is done well enough that I wish some of the authors had pushed their investigations into some of the unresolved limiting cases of freedom that so perplex our society. At what points shall we forbid those acts of freedom that inflict harm upon society? Do we really know how to distinguish between the erroneous conscience that deserves freedom and the criminal conscience that must be thwarted? To what extent may society prescribe duties that override individual protests, e.g., in payment of taxes or military service in Vietnam? Are there truly tragic and irresolvable conflicts between personal freedom and public consensus?

But no one book can cover the whole subject of freedom. This one illumines enough topics—including several not touched in this review—to deserve the attention and gratitude of readers.

I conclude with an observation that may be unduly partisan for this era of ecumenical good will. This book appears with the conventional *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur*. An explanation points out that these are an "official declaration" that the book is "free of doctrinal or moral error." I have several questions about the meaning of the word free in that statement as compared with its meaning throughout the book.

A Tree Full of Stars

DAVIS GRUBB

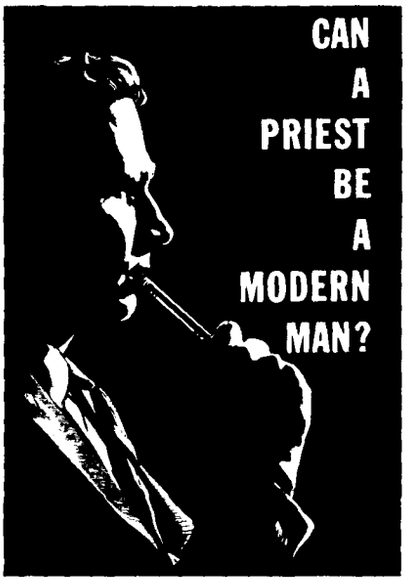
Scribners', $3.50

DON CRINKLAW

Judging from the photograph on the jacket of this slim volume, Davis Grubb is still a fairly young man. This gives a special poignance to the reason for his failure to reach "major" status: in both theme and style, Grubb is at least twenty years behind the times.

Had *Voices of Glory* (an account of a Public Health official's trials in introducing modern methods to a small town) appeared during the "social conscience" period of the 30's, it would most likely have been hailed as a "modern classic." But today's critics deemed it maudlin and oversimplified, and dismissed it. Similarly, Grubb's "nightmare" novels, *Night of the Hunter* and *The Watchman*, would have found vogue in our earlier, pseudo-Gothic, time, but were passed over by most modern readers as gaudy, melodramatic and overwritten.

One must apologize, I suppose, for



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liking *Voices of Glory;* but if one can cut through the treacle and the simple (or simpleminded) plot, one can find sections of some of the loveliest writing being produced. And *Night of the Hunter* and *The Watchman,* with their roaring language and their portraits of shadowy menace, struck me as genuinely hair-raising. I do not find Grubb's rhetoric as boozy as others seem to, but, rather, firmly controlled by an excellent sense of cadence, alliteration and structure. (If Grubb ever does manage to break through with a "big one" I expect at least one thesis on his punctuation. I wonder how much time he devotes to the proper placing of all those dashes, commas, colons and semicolons?) Granted, Davis Grubb has to be classed as "minor." But it is a time when all writers seem to work at being minor, and when most of what is presented to us as fiction sounds flat, narrow, contrived, over-rational and rather tired. Grubb's version of the "barbaric yawp" will, at least to some of us, always be especially welcome.

Now, to Grubb's Christmas offering, *A Tree Full of Stars.* After the foregoing, it becomes a prickly job to announce that the book is disappointing. (Christmas stories have always held a certain invulnerability to criticism; anyone who attacks them is sure to appear some sort of monster. But business is business.) Nearly all of Grubb's favorite devices are contained in the book's 158 pages: the earthy names (Toby Dance, Darby Purdy, Preacher Ezra Twining can join Dede Moonshine, Marcy Cresap, Deke Virgin and Mister Christmas Janders of the earlier books. Where *does* Mr. Grubb find those names?); the cascading sentences ("And if you would wish to have it once again for your own, you must patiently and carefully learn to read the language of certain lights that sometimes come to human eyes and of the wistful, sweet curl that steals to the corners of lips caught between laughter and dumbfound wonder that is happy weeping"); and the visual (for Grubb anyway) collection of riverbottom poor, pious bigots, colorful grotesques (Captain Anschutz and his performing dogs), and so on.

The problem is that they remain devices. The pivot of the book—a magical Christmas tree in the Dance home that will not be cut down, thus imbuing the family with the "spirit of Christmas" all year round, igniting outrage in the aforementioned pious bigots, and driving the Dances first into poverty and then into exile—seems childish rather than childlike, and serves only to make the other elements of the book appear out of place. Grubb has always tended to sketch his people either black or white, but he has usually given us a central concept solid enough to make his exaggerations seem plausible. Here it is lacking. Would the pious bigots act *that* outraged at the existence of such a tree? And would the "believers" accept such a thing without the *slightest* curiosity? This might sound like carping—after all, *Tree* is supposed to be a fantasy, and the tree can be taken simply as the fulfillment of the child Toby's Christmas wish—but the fact is that the book lacks these tenuous links with reality that even a fantasy must have to be successful.

Instead of reality, Grubb offers us more of the sentimental-naturalistic vignettes—the maid Jewel's romance with a man several decades her senior, the death of Grandmother Marya, the penultimate scene in the town church—that he does so well, and would probably seem "right" in another book. But here they seem misplaced, and faintly ridiculous.

Contrary to the jacket blurb, *A Tree Full of Stars* will probably not "take a permanent place in Christmas literature." It can be recommended only to diehard Grubb fans, who will probably despise themselves for liking what is not really a very good book.

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Journal from Ellipsia

HORTENSE CALISHER

Little, Brown, $5.95

WILLIAM JAMES SMITH

Hortense Calisher is one of our finest American writers, and a book of hers that fails carries with it a disappointment that another's might not. This is a case, however, of a failure with an important meliorative factor — *Journal from Ellipsia* does not have the heft or the approach of a major effort. The novel is a sport, a by-blow, and even in terms of Miss Calisher's varied output a matter of curiosity. It is, one might say, a science-fiction novel, though of a talent that lifts it above the usual run of that simple-minded genre. It is certainly a failure as a sci-

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REVIEWERS

ROSEMARY F. DEEN, *herself a poet, teaches English in the School of General Studies at Queens College.*

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WILLIAM JAMES SMITH *is a frequent contributor to these pages.*

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ence-fiction novel, which would be of little consequence if it succeeded on a higher level of fiction, but unfortunately it does not come across there either.

The story is laid in the near future at an academic research center in the Ramapos and revolves around a memorial service for a missing colleague, one Janice Jamison, an anthropologist who has mysteriously vanished. The service is conducted by John Linhouse, a former lover of the missing woman, according to instructions which she has left. This eerie ceremonial turns out to be the recorded "journal" of a – let's face it – Creature from Outer Space. The Creature is from the distant planet of Ellipsia, where Oneness has reached its metaphysical limits, and the concept of Otherness and the complexities of the human muddle exert a horrid fascination. It hardly gives away the plot to say that Janice and the Creature have done a little space-shuttling, Janice abandoning the human struggle for the elliptoid bliss of outer space and the Creature squirming into the terrifying uncertainties of life on this world.

One simple aspect of the story is enormously successful. The encounter of Janice and the Creature and their strange love affair as they pass in the night on their parabolas toward each other's world is touching and suspenseful, and Miss Calisher's stage effects are both charming and amusing. Miss Calisher, however, is not one to settle for simple effects and she has, as though shamed by a naïve idea, proceeded to complicate her story to the point of unintelligibility.

I cannot even begin to suggest what her ultimate intention may have been. A "message" is implicit on every page, and a number of messages tentatively put themselves forward in the course of the book but none of them holds water in terms of the whole. Much is made, for example, of the fact that all the earthly space travelers are women and that the sexually ambiguous Creature evolves into a man, but there is no way of applying any interpretative significance to the facts. It is all, so to speak, up in the air. Miss Calisher at best has a fastidious horror of coming right out and saying what she means and in this novel the propensity is fatal.

The serious uses of science-fiction are two: to comment on human mores and human activities in a fresh light with, as here, the mechanical assistance of an alien observer; and, correlatively, to say that which is forbidden under the disguise of interpreting the actions of alien creatures. In the first effort Miss Calisher is successful. The Creature's wry and startled commentaries on our foibles give Miss Calisher the opportunity to exercise her genius for aphoristic observation and her lesser talent for restrained humor. But if she is saying anything which is really startling or "forbidden" – and she always seems to be – it just doesn't come across.

The Creature sums up what he has learned: "What is humane? The small distance. What is wild? The mortal weight. Wherever there is difference, there – is morality. Where there is brute death, there love flirts, the shy observer. I had my feelings now, those mysterious pains which held them to living. And I said a blessing for all those who live in mystery. The wilderness was all before me – and I was glad that I had come." Well, welcome, Creature. You certainly don't do much toward lightening our mystery but you make a good case for its fascination. Perhaps that is all your Creator meant for you.

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 523*)

be the basis for deciding whether other people can read it. But even if there is unanimous agreement that an article is in bad taste, and even if it does contain factual errors, the civilized way to deal with it is *not* confiscation. Two years ago in *The Critic*, Daniel Callahan suggested the eminently sane way of handling a case of irresponsible college journalism: write a letter to the editor; tell the student that he is stupid, misinformed, uncharitable. This is what Mr. Sheehan and the Manhattan administration would do if they read some-

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thing in the public press which raised their ire. What would they think if, for example, the President of our country ordered a seizure of every newspaper which carried an article that he deemed in poor taste or factually untrue? Preposterous. Well, then, if such tactics are anathema out there in the world, why, one wonders, do they manage to find a place on the Catholic college campus, even one which is as liberal and forward-thinking as Mr. Sheehan claims Manhattan to be?

THOMAS LICKONA

"Tightrope Walking"

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Father Gregory Baum's article ("Birth Control—What Happened?" Dec. 24) tells us how fearfully close to tightrope walking moves the Holy Spirit. So Schema 13 (Chap. I, part 2) now shows a doctrinal development, indicating that the goals of marriage cannot be stratified, but must be identified with the evolving goals of the married persons themselves. He tells us in effect that there must be some communication between the partners in marriage to determine what they are achieving in marriage, and what they hope to achieve. In short, he tells us that the Church is beginning now to assume a directive role in the moral issues of marriage, rather than a univocal and universal legislative function. What he is really saying is that faith and morality are not a series of propositions and laws, but a personal dynamic that grows variously—as love ever does—according to the vision and commitment of the persons. This really means that the subjective conscience will have objective validity.

Where Father Baum fails us in his conclusions is in awaiting "the authoritative norms which the Pope himself . . . will propose (as) . . . an indispensable and precious guide for the Christian conscience." We already have such a guide in the Council document. The goals of marriage have been defined, the hierarchy of ends exists no longer. Now the individual conscience has to attempt to achieve these goals according to a personal commitment of faith. For a growing number of Catholics this means the use of contraceptive practices. For Catholics not to follow the evidence of their own conscience would be cowardly, for them to wait submissively for a guiding decree would be to deny the very "faith-insights" of the living Christians which brought about most of the conclusions of Vatican II. Vatican II merely said out publicly and formally what we had been practicing privately. How childish to assume that the Holy Spirit will operate differently in the next few years.

It's time confessors stopped imposing their personal conclusions on honest penitents, forcing people to shop around or stop receiving the Sacraments. It's time Catholic doctors stopped imposing their consciences on their patients, and permitted the patients to follow their own convictions. Once we have a people and a clergy that is willing to follow sincere conclusions, arrived at by honest reflection and prayer, we won't have to wait around for the never-coming guiding decree. The Council has spoken. We merely have to follow its lead. It had nothing to say about contraceptive practices ultimately because there is nothing that can be universally said. Only the goals of marriage can be "universalized." Individuals will have to decide responsibly how these goals will be achieved. For some it will mean contraception, for some abstinence, for some even rhythm (I've tried it with cigarettes for years—unsuccessfully). I hope that for fewer and fewer it will mean another instance of awaiting papal fingers to lift the spoon to a baby's lips. The Church gives us a challenge, and Fr. Baum wants us to wait for law. Shame that he was so close to the Spirit and learned so little.

(REV.) JAMES J. KAVANAUGH

"Responsible Concern"

West Springfield, Mass.

To the Editors: For some time Father Gregory Baum has been an articulate proponent of the thesis that the Church is incapable of teaching the natural law with infallibility or definitive authority. Certainly he is free to plead his cause in a question that has not been definitively resolved by the teaching Church. Yet, causes should be pleaded with responsible concern for the consciences of the faithful.

Is this concern at all apparent when a theologian of great repute who is identified as "a theological adviser at the fourth session of the Council" presents his opinion in a disputed point as being obviously certain? This question is raised by the last paragraph of "Birth Control – What Happened" (December 24). Father Baum maintains that it is "quite clear" that a "real doubt" now exists on whether there is a morally significant difference between rhythm and any form of artificial contraception. "Real doubt" is, I presume, journalese for "positive doubt." Since the Christian conscience is not bound by a doubtful imperative, Father Baum can only be saying that the use of contraceptives in Christian marriage is now morally permissible.

Can the "real doubt" ever be definitively resolved? Father Baum unhesitatingly says "No," because "the solution is in no way contained in divine revelation." Isn't this begging the question? Would not a more tentative stance be more charitable to the People of God

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and more intellectually becoming? Is it not perhaps true that the revelation of the dignity of man, contained in the Gospel, implicitly includes or presupposes a teaching concerning certain forms of human behavior that are incompatible with that dignity?

The Christian people are anxiously awaiting authoritative norms that our Holy Father has promised us in this matter of marital ethics. Is Father Baum acting responsibly when he tells us that these norms "shall not be a definitive interpretation of divine law, binding under all circumstances"? In other words, we should gratefully receive them as a useful guide for the Christian conscience, but a guide that each one will be free to accept or reject provided he does so with reverent respect. Howsoever strongly the Pope as universal teacher proclaims norms in this matter, he could be wrong, for in this matter he can't be infallible!

I submit that such pleading is an irresponsible use of free speech in the Church. I would recommend your readers to R.A. McCormick "Notes on Moral Theology," *Theological Studies* 26 (Dec. 1965), 608-615.

(REV.) CRONAN REGAN, C.P.

Reply

The Catholic Church is infallible in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and, at certain significant moments of history in defending and explaining this Gospel. Infallibility always has to do with revelation. Aspects of natural morality which are not explicitly or implicitly contained in divine revelation do not belong to the area of the Church's infallibility.

At the same time, the Church teaches with authority in areas where she does not claim infallibility. When papal and ecclesiastical documents teach theological conclusions, natural and social morality, norms for biblical and theological research, etc. they are of greatest authority for Catholics; but they are not infallible. It is worth mentioning that whatever is not infallible is fallible: *tertium non datur*. The authoritative character of the Church's non-infallible teaching is based on her pastoral mission: the purpose of this teaching is disciplinary and pedagogical. But this kind of teaching is reformable.

The change in the Church's authoritative teaching is always accompanied by real anguish. Many people suffer. This became clear in the issue of religious liberty. The conciliar minority opposing the declaration on religious liberty insisted that the authoritative teaching of the Church was being changed.

In the case of contraception the Church of today is divided. This is true of the papal commission; this is true of the clergy, as this correspondence suggests; this is true of the Catholic people. The fact is evident. I do not see how, in this situation, the norms of the past can create a grave obligation.

According to the basic principles of moral theology, in case of doubt the Catholic must follow his conscience formed by the Gospel preached and celebrated in the Church.

I ask Father Kavanaugh to read again the last sentence of my article and to judge whether it was written to make Catholics wait for law or to provide for another eventuality.

(REV.) GREGORY BAUM

St. John's

Amherst, Mass.

To the Editors: As Catholic faculty members of Amherst College and the University of Massachusetts, we strongly oppose the dismissal of thirty-one professors and the arbitrary treatment of professional colleagues at St. John's University. We also express concern for the quality of education for the students which will be irreparably damaged by this action for years to come. We urge an immediate investigation by the American Association of University Professors and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

E. R. LEADBETTER
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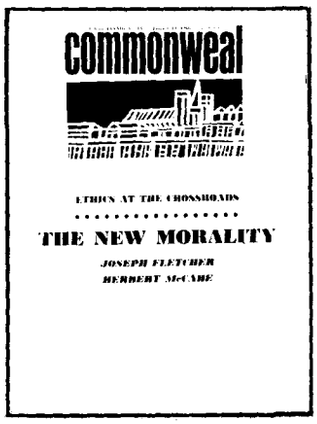

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